

CITY OF WAUSAU, 407 Grant Street, Wausau, WI 54403

RESOLUTION OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Approving legislative resolution urging the FCC to continue to require cable operators and other video providers to provide channel space and transmission of local PEG access channels at no charge to municipalities

Committee Action: Approved 5-0

Fiscal Impact: None

File Number: 18-1112

Date Introduced: November 13, 2018

FISCAL IMPACT SUMMARY

COSTS	<i>Budget Neutral</i>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
	<i>Included in Budget:</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Budget Source:</i>
	<i>One-time Costs:</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Amount:</i>
	<i>Recurring Costs:</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Amount:</i>
SOURCE	<i>Fee Financed:</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Amount:</i>
	<i>Grant Financed:</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Amount:</i>
	<i>Debt Financed:</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Amount</i> <i>Annual Retirement</i>
	<i>TID Financed:</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Amount:</i>
	<i>TID Source: Increment Revenue <input type="checkbox"/> Debt <input type="checkbox"/> Funds on Hand <input type="checkbox"/> Interfund Loan <input type="checkbox"/></i>		

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the City of Wausau is a local franchising authority operating under Wisconsin's state franchise law, which severely limits its power to regulate cable television to serve the needs and interests of the community; and

WHEREAS, cable franchise fees, called video provider fees in Wisconsin statutes, are paid by cable companies and other video providers to Wisconsin municipalities for access to municipal public rights-of-way in accordance with federal law; and

WHEREAS, video provider fees are set by Wisconsin statute and cannot be increased or decreased from the rate a municipality received in 2008, unless a municipality collected no franchise fee at the time; and

WHEREAS, Wisconsin municipalities are forbidden by Wisconsin statute from collecting a "PEG fee" to fund PEG-related equipment and facilities, making them completely reliant on the static franchise fee to fund public, education, and government (PEG) access television; and

WHEREAS, cable operators have long served the public interest by providing one or more PEG access channels on their systems to local franchising authorities at no cost for the use of communities based on their needs and interests pursuant to federal law; and

WHEREAS, setting a financial value on PEG access channels, whether cost-based or market-based, that municipalities will be forced to pay out of franchise fees could force Wisconsin municipalities, including the City of Wausau, to close our media centers and give back the PEG access channels, though we do not want to do so, due to a lack of funding; and

WHEREAS, these local public, education, and government (PEG) access channels serve important community needs in the City of Wausau including fostering transparency in government, informing and involving citizens in the electoral process, providing information on municipal services and serving local non-profits, the business community, the local arts scene, and places of worship, and

WHEREAS, PEG access channels enable the public to use cable television, a mass medium, which otherwise would be closed to them, to communicate to diverse groups and to the larger community about matters of concern to them; and

WHEREAS, PEG access channels provide audiences with information from diverse sources because they are open to local government, local schools, and members of the community; and

WHEREAS, PEG access channels are the only channels on the entire cable lineup with local programming on it most hours of the day; and

WHEREAS, in regulating mass media the Federal Communications Commission has always been guided by the principles important to a democracy including access to a diversity of information sources and serving the needs of local communities.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Common Council of the City of Wausau urges the FCC to not change the way federal law has always been interpreted and to continue to require cable operators and other video providers to provide channel space and transmission of local PEG access channels at no charge to municipalities, thus preserving their right to collect franchise fees.

Approved:

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Robert B. Mielke", written in dark ink.

Robert B. Mielke, Mayor